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INTRAOCULAR LENS
[Gan'nai ren'zu]

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1. Title of the Invention

Intraocular Lens

2. Claim

An intraocular lens used by being inserted into a crystalline lens capsule; said intraocular lens characterized by including (a) an optical lens comprising a light-transmitting material having a convex lens function, (b) at least one holding portion wherein the part of it corresponding to the optical path of light being perceived serves as a light transmission-permitting portion to permit the transmission of light, (c) and a coupling means which elastically couples the optical lens portion and holding portion in a state in which they are energized and brought into contact with the anterior and posterior capsule portions of the aforesaid crystalline lens capsule, respectively, outside the optical path portion for the light being perceived in accordance with the deformation of said crystalline lens capsule to permit the optical lens portion and holding portion to move closer to or farther away from each other.

3. Detailed Specifications

*Number in the margin indicates pagination in the foreign text.

(Technical Fields)

The present invention relates to an intraocular lens used by being inserted into the capsules of a crystalline lens and to an intraocular lens having a focal point adjustment function.

(Background Technology)

The usage of intraocular lenses, which are used as lenses for correcting eyesight following cataract surgery and other lenses, has increased under a large range of clinical evaluations performed in Japan in recent years due to improvements in lenses and developments in surgical techniques. It is confirmed that lenses have much more outstanding functionality than the glasses and contact lenses for cataracts generally used in the past.

Incidentally, such an intraocular lens is an optical element (artificial crystalline lens) inserted into the anterior and posterior chambers of the eyeball as a substitute for a lens extirpated from the eyeball during plastic surgery. As shown in Figure 11, it is generally composed of a biconvex or planoconvex disk-shaped lens main body 2 and a plurality of holding portions 4 that extended integrally from the lens main body 2 for holding the lens main body 2 in a prescribed location inside the eyeball. However, the focal point of a conventional intraocular lens having this structure was fixed; hence, when the focal distance of the lens was set in accordance with a short distance, there was a problem because the image of an object at a long distance could not

be recognized clearly. Conversely, when the focal distance of /280 the lens was set in accordance with a long distance, there was an inherent problem because the image of an object at a short distance could not be perceived distinctly.

Meanwhile, an intraocular lens was proposed in Tokkai no. 63-57044 in recent years so that the focal distance could be adjusted by using a liquid crystal lens and regulating the voltage applied to this liquid crystal lens. According to such an intraocular lens using the liquid crystal lens, the applied voltage is regulated in accordance with the distance to the observed object to correspond the focal distance of the liquid crystal lens to the distance to that observed object; hence, the image of the observed object is formed vividly on the retina regardless of the distance to the observed object to make the observed object thereof more distinctly recognizable.

Incidentally, there were problems with an intraocular lens using the liquid crystal lens illustrated in this bulletin because, in addition to the structure itself of the liquid crystal lens being complex, the configuration thereof was extremely complex, the implementability was low, and so was the practicality since a means for sensing the pupil aperture, a means for arithmetically processing the distance to the observed object based on the pupil aperture thereof, and a means for applying a voltage corresponding to the arithmetic results of the arithmetic means thereof were required separately for the lens main body (liquid crystal lens).

(Problems to be Solved)

The present invention was achieved at this time with these circumstances as the background. The problem to be solved thereof is an intraocular lens able to substantially adjust the focal length in accordance with the distance to the observed object and to realize an intraocular lens whose structure is simple and with outstanding practicality.

(Solution)

Then, in order to solve such problems, the intraocular lens used by being inserted into a crystalline lens capsule in the present invention is constituted so as to include (a) an optical lens comprising a light-transmitting material having a convex lens function, (b) at least one holding portion wherein the part of it corresponding to the optical path of light being perceived serves as a light transmission-permitting portion to permit the transmission of light, and (c) and a coupling means which elastically couples the optical lens portion and holding portion in a state in which they are energized and brought into contact with the anterior and posterior capsule portions of the aforesaid crystalline lens capsule, respectively, outside the optical path portion for the light being perceived in accordance with the deformation of said crystalline lens capsule to permit the optical lens portion and holding portion to move closer to or farther away from each other.

(Operation)

With an intraocular lens having this structure, when the ciliary muscles contained in the ciliary bodies in the eyeball are tensed or relaxed, changing the thickness of the crystalline lens capsule, the optical lens portion is displaced forwards and backwards relative to the retina, in accordance with the change in the thickness of that crystalline lens capsule, the focal point of the optical lens portion and then the intraocular lens shifts forward and backwards. As a result, the image of the observed object is formed more vividly on the retina regardless of the distance to that observed object, and the image of that observed object can be recognized more distinctly.

Then, in the present invention, in addition to such a substantial focal point adjustment function being obtained with a simple structure merely by elastically coupling the optical lens portion and holding portion by a coupling means, the operation for such a substantial focal point adjustment is performed based on the original focal point adjustment functions of the eye, i.e., the tensing or relaxing of the ciliary muscles; hence, the necessity for providing equipment besides the lens itself, as with the intraocular lens disclosed in the aforesaid publication (Tokkai no. 63-57044), can be eliminated.

(Practical Examples)

In order to specifically clarify the present invention even more, practical examples thereof will be explained in detail below on the basis of the drawings.

First of all, an intraocular lens 10, which is one practical example of the present invention, is shown in Figures 1 and 2. As seen from these drawings, the intraocular lens 10 of this practical example is composed of a lens material 12 serving as the optical /281 lens portion and having a disk-shaped planoconvex lens shape, a rear member 14 serving as the holding portion and having the same disk-shaped planoconvex lens shape, and four flexible loop members 16 serving as the coupling means and coaxially and elastically couple the lens member 12 and rear member 14 to each other at prescribed lengths.

At this time, the lens member 12 is composed of the usual material for forming an intraocular lens having a translucent material, such as polymethyl methacrylate, silicone, hydroxymethyl methacrylate, glass and silicone elastomer. It is constituted with a diameter larger than the aperture diameter of a pupil 20, which is the hole in the iris 18 of the eye (see Fig. 3); specifically, it is 4 to 8 mm. Then, as shown in Fig. 2, the convex surface is arranged on the outside, that is, in a state positioned on the opposite side of the rear member 14.

Moreover, at this time, as shown in Fig. 1, an operation for inserting the intraocular lens 10 into a crystalline lens capsule 22 (see Fig. 3) which will be described later and an alignment operation after that insertion operation are performed easily on the lens member 12; hence, a plurality (here, four) of through-

holes 24 for inserting and catching a hook and the like are formed in positions outside the optical path portion for the light perceived by the retina.

In addition, the aforesaid rear member 14 is composed of the same translucent material as the lens member 12. Its diameter is also set to a size almost the same as that of the lens member 12. Then, as with the lens member 12, the convex surface is arranged on the outside, that is, in a state positioned on the opposite side of the lens member 12.

Furthermore, the loop member 16 serving as the aforesaid coupling means is composed of a material, such as polymethyl methacrylate, polyvinylidene fluoride, polypropylene, silicone and hydroxyethyl methacrylate, that is formed the shape of the letter U. Then, as shown in Figs. 1 and 2, one end of each of the loop members protrudes into the mounting holes formed in the outer circumferential portions of the lens member 12 and rear member 14 and deposited and fixed thereto while they turn 90° about the optical axes (central axes) of the lens member 12 and rear member 14, as observed from the side of the intraocular lens 10, and are in a slanted state at prescribed angles to the optical axes (optical axis of the intraocular lens 10) of the lens member 12 and rear member 14.

Then, at this time, specifically, the thickness of the crystalline lens is normally about 4 mm in an unrestrained state

and not inserted into the crystalline lens capsule 22 so that the thickness of the entire intraocular lens 10 is nearly the same as that of the crystalline lens; hence, the lens member 12 and rear member 14 are mutually coupled by these loop members 16 so that the overall thickness is about 3 to 5 mm. As described below, while the intraocular lens 10 is inserted and set inside the crystalline lens 22, the inside surface (convex surface) of the lens member 12 and the outside surface (convex surface) of the rear member 14 are energized and brought into contact with the anterior capsule portion 26 and posterior capsule portion 28 of the crystalline lens capsule 22, respectively, on the basis of on the elastic forces of the respective loop members 16.

Moreover, the end of each of the aforesaid loop members 16 is formed in a position separated from the optical path portion for the light perceived by the retina so that the mounting holes of the lens member 12 and rear member 14 do not prohibit vision as with the through-hole 24 formed in the aforesaid lens member 12 that protrude inward and are deposited and fixed.

Incidentally, as shown in Fig. 3, the intraocular lens 10 is inserted into the crystalline lens capsule 22 subsequent to extirpation of the nucleus and cortex from the crystalline lens capsule 22 so that, with respect to the incision opening of the crystalline lens capsule 22 through which the nucleus and cortex

are extirpated, the lens member 12 is positioned on the anterior capsule portion 26 side of the crystalline lens capsule 22 and the rear member 14 is positioned on the posterior capsule portion 28 side of the crystalline lens capsule 22 and then the intraocular lens is aligned inside the crystalline lens capsule 22 so that the optical axes of the lens member 12 and rear member 14 coincide with the optical axis of the eyeball.

Moreover, based on the elastic forces of the loop members 16, as described above, since the outside convex surface of the lens member 12 is energized and brought into contact with the anterior capsule portion 26 of the crystalline lens capsule 22 and the outside convex surface of the rear member 14 is energized and brought into contact with the posterior capsule portion 28 of the crystalline lens capsule 22, respectively, the intraocular lens 10 inserted and set inside such a crystalline lens capsule 22 is /282 stabilized in a set position inside the crystalline lens capsule 22 where it is held.

In addition, at this time, the operation for inserting and setting the intraocular lens 10 inside the crystalline lens capsule 22 is performed by inserting and catching a hook or the like via the through-hole 24 formed in the lens member 12, as described above.

The intraocular lens 10 inserted and set inside the

crystalline lens capsule 22 of the eyeball in this way is held in the set position while it is energized and brought into contact with the anterior capsule portion 26 of the crystalline lens capsule 22 with the outside convex surface of the lens member 12 on the basis of the elastic forces of the loop members 16, on the one hand, and also energized and brought into contact with the posterior capsule portion 28 of the crystalline lens capsule 22 on the outside convex surface of the rear member 14.

Therefore, when the thickness of the crystalline lens capsule, 22 changes due to the tensing or relaxing of the ciliary muscles of the ciliary bodies 30, the lens member 12 and rear member 14 of the intraocular lens 10 move closer to or farther away from each other in accordance with that change in the thickness of the crystalline lens capsule 22 and on the basis of the elastic force of the loop member 16 or against the force of the loop member 16. As a result, the lens member 12 and rear member 14 move closer to or farther away from the retina, respectively. Then, as a result of the lens member 12 and rear member 14 moving closer to or farther away from the retina, respectively, the focal position of the entire intraocular lens 10 comprising the lens member 12 and rear member 14 moves relatively forwards and backwards with respect to the retina.

That is, when the ciliary muscles tense or relax due a change in the distance to an observed object, the focal point of the

intraocular lens 10 moves forwards and backwards in accordance with the change in the distance to that observed object. Thus, the image of that observed object is formed more vividly on the retina than through a conventional intraocular lens having a fixed focal point. Accordingly, the image of the observed object can be perceived and recognized clearly regardless of the distance to that observed image, and moreover, its structure is extremely simple and no special maintenance is particularly required; hence, it is excellent for practical use.

Moreover, in the intraocular lens 10 in the above example, the loop members 16 serving as the coupling means are provided while they respectively with respect to the optical axis of the intraocular lens 10 (the optical axes of the lens member 12 and rear member 14) as seen from the side of the intraocular lens 10. But as shown in Figs. 4 and 5 and as seen from the side of the intraocular lens 10, it is also possible to provide four loop members 16 so that they match the optical axis of the intraocular lens 10 thereof. Additionally, as shown in Figs. 6, 7 and 8, it is also possible to elastically couple the lens member 12 and rear member 14 with loop members 16 formed in the shape of an arrow, vane or letter V. Furthermore, the coupling means elastically couples the lens member 12 and rear member 14 outside the optical path of the light perceived by the retina and it does not scratch the tissues of the eye, such as the crystalline lens 22. While the

intraocular lens 10 is set inside the crystalline lens capsule 22, since the lens member 12 and rear member 14 are energized and brought into contact with the anterior capsule portion 26 and posterior capsule portion 28 of the crystalline lens capsule 22, the lens member 12 and rear member 14 can be permitted to move closer to or farther away from [each other] along with a change in the thickness of the crystalline lens capsule 22. But when the loop members 16 are used as the coupling means thereof, it is desirable to provide the loop members 16 in a state in which they slant with respect to the optical axis of the intraocular lens 10 as seen from the side of the lens 10 so that they do not get caught on the intraocular lens 10 when it is being inserted into the crystalline lens capsule 22, as with the intraocular lens 10 shown in Figs. 1 and 2. In addition, the lens member 12 and rear member 14 are held in a coaxial state so that they move closer to or farther apart from each other; hence, as shown in Figs. 1 and 8, it is desirable to use the plurality of loop members 16 as a set.

Additionally, in the intraocular lens 10 in the aforesaid practical example, the convex lens function of the lens member 12 is given to both the lens member 12 serving as the optical lens portion and the rear member 14 serving as the holding portion, but it is not always necessary to maintain the convex lens function by using the rear member 14 as the holding portion. For example, as

shown in Fig. 9, it is also possible to adopt a flat disk-shaped rear member as the rear member 14. In addition, as shown in /283 Figs. 4 and 5, it is also possible to adopt an optical lens having a structure in which the portion corresponding to the optical path portion for light perceived by the retina serves as a through-hole 32. In the intraocular lens shown in Figs. 4 and 5, the through-hole 32 serves as the light transmission-permitting portion.

However, at this time, as with the intraocular lens 10 in the aforesaid practical example, in giving a convex lens function to not only the lens member 12, as the optical lens portion, but also the rear member 14, as the holding portion, the convex lens functions (refractive indexes) of either of the lens member 12 or rear member 14 can be increased when the focal position of the entire intraocular lens changes in accordance with the change in the thickness of the crystalline lens capsule 22, but due to the fact that one convex lens function is sufficiently smaller than the other convex lens function, the lens member 12 is distributed to the anterior capsule portion 26 side or the posterior capsule portion 28 side of the crystalline lens capsule 22. It is more desirable to maintain the convex lens function with the lens member 12 only so that it is a smaller convex lens function and an efficient focal point adjustment function is obtained.

Furthermore, according to the aforesaid practical example, the rear member 14 comes in direct contact with the posterior capsule

portion 28 of the crystalline lens capsule 22 at the outside convex surface thereof, but it is not always necessary that the rear member 14 come in direct contact with the posterior capsule portion 28 of the crystalline lens capsule 22 at the outside surface thereof. For example, as shown in Fig. 10, a protruding portion 34 is provided on outer circumferential part on the outside surface of the rear member 14 outside the optical path for the perceived light and a prescribed gap is provided between the outside surface of the rear member 14 and the posterior capsule portion 28 of the crystalline lens capsule 22. By doing this, focusing of a laser beam on the rear member 14 is successfully avoided during a treatment for late cataract by laser irradiation and it is possible to satisfactorily prevent the rear member 14 from being damaged by the laser beam.

Furthermore, in the aforesaid practical example, the lens member 12 had a planoconvex lens shape, but this lens member 12 can have a biconvex lens shape or a meniscus shape.

However, when there is the fear of close contact between the lens member 12 and rear member 14 due to the surface tension or adhesive force of the pressure-sensitive substance when a pressure-sensitive substance is used at the time of insertion into the crystalline lens capsule 22, it is desirable to use, e.g., a meniscus-shaped lens member as the lens member 12 so that a gap can be provided between the lens member 12 and rear member 14. It is

also desirable to provide a protruding portion on at least one outer circumferential portion of the mutually opposing surfaces of the lens member 12 and rear member 14 when a planoconvex lens-shaped or biconvex lens-shaped lens member 12 is adopted so that a prescribed gap can be provided between the lens member 12 and rear member 14.

Additionally, it is desirable that the rear member 14 serving as the holding portion, as with the intraocular lens 10 in the aforesaid practical example, achieve a diameter nearly equal to the lens member 12 serving as the optical lense portion so that the incision of the crystalline lens capsule 22 is not larger than necessary and the intraocular lens 10 is stably held in a set position inside the crystalline lens capsule 22 when the intraocular lens 10 is inserted into the crystalline lens 22. But this diameter is not always limited to a diameter equal to that of the lens member 12 during and after insertion of the intraocular lens into the crystalline lens capsule 22 if the intraocular lens 10 can be stably held in the set position thereof without scratching the crystalline lens capsule 22.

Other than leaving out enumerated separate specific examples, it goes without saying that the present invention can be carried out in embodiments in which various modifications, revision, improvements, and the like can be applied in a range without compromising the spirit thereof.

(Advantages of the Invention)

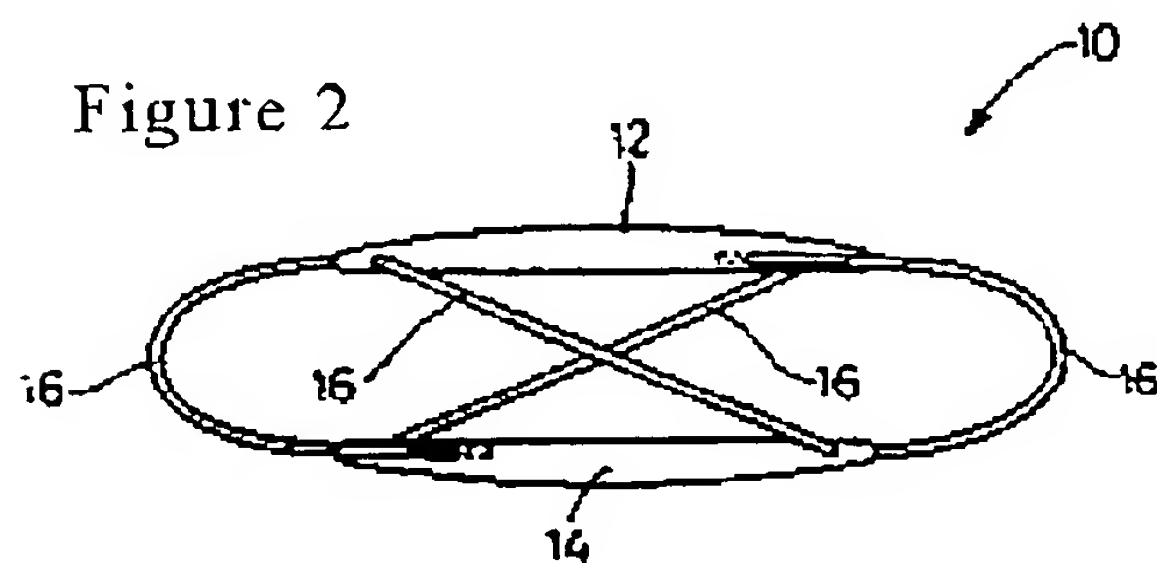
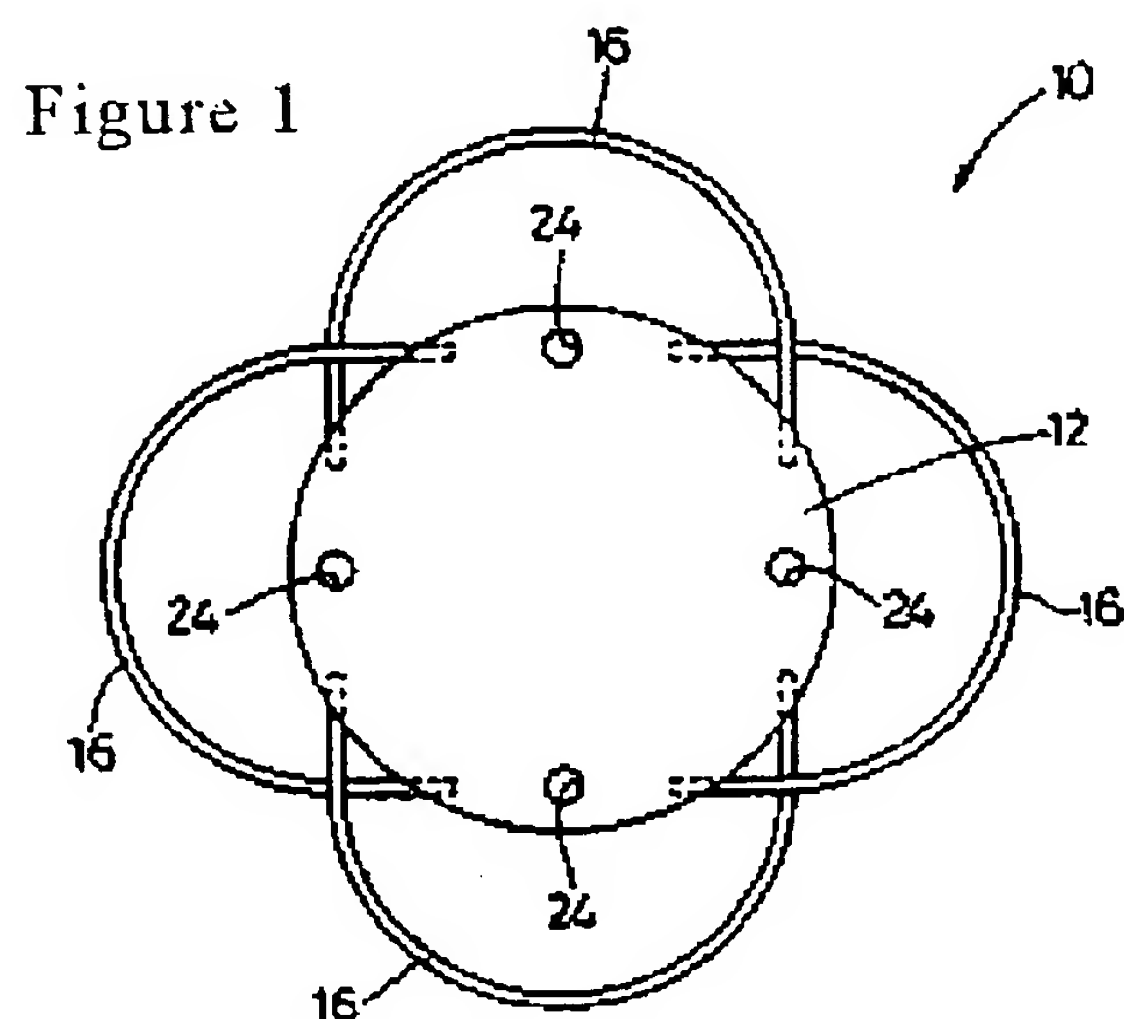
As seen from the above explanations, in the intraocular lens in accordance to the present invention, the focal distance of the lense can be adjusted substantially in accordance with the distance to the observed object by using an extremely simple structure having only a lens main body which is inserted and set in the crystalline lens. Accordingly, the great industrial significance of the present invention rests with the ability to realize an automatic focal point adjustment function with an extremely simple structure.

4. Brief Description of the Figures

Figure 1 is a top view showing an example of the intraocular lens in accordance with the present invention; **Figure 2** is a front view thereof; and **Figure 3** is an explanatory view showing the set /284 state of the intraocular lens in Fig. 1 inside the crystalline lens capsule. **Figure 4** is a drawing corresponding to Fig. 1 showing another example of the intraocular lens in accordance with the present invention and **Figure 5** is a partial cutaway front view of the intraocular lens in Fig. 4. **Figures 6 to 8** are respective front views schematically showing even more examples of the intraocular lens in accordance with the present invention. **Figure 9** is a perspective view showing an example of the reverse member adoptable as the holding portion of the intraocular lens in accordance with the present invention; **Figure 10** is a cross section

showing yet another example of the reverse member adoptable as the holding portion. Figure 11 is a top view showing an example of a conventional intraocular lens.

10: intraocular lens; 12: lens member (optical lens portion);
 14: rear member (holding portion); 16: loop member (coupling
 means); 22: crystalline lens capsule; 26: anterior capsule portion;
 28: posterior capsule portion; 30: ciliary body; 32: through-hole
 (light
 transmission-permitting portion)



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Figure 3

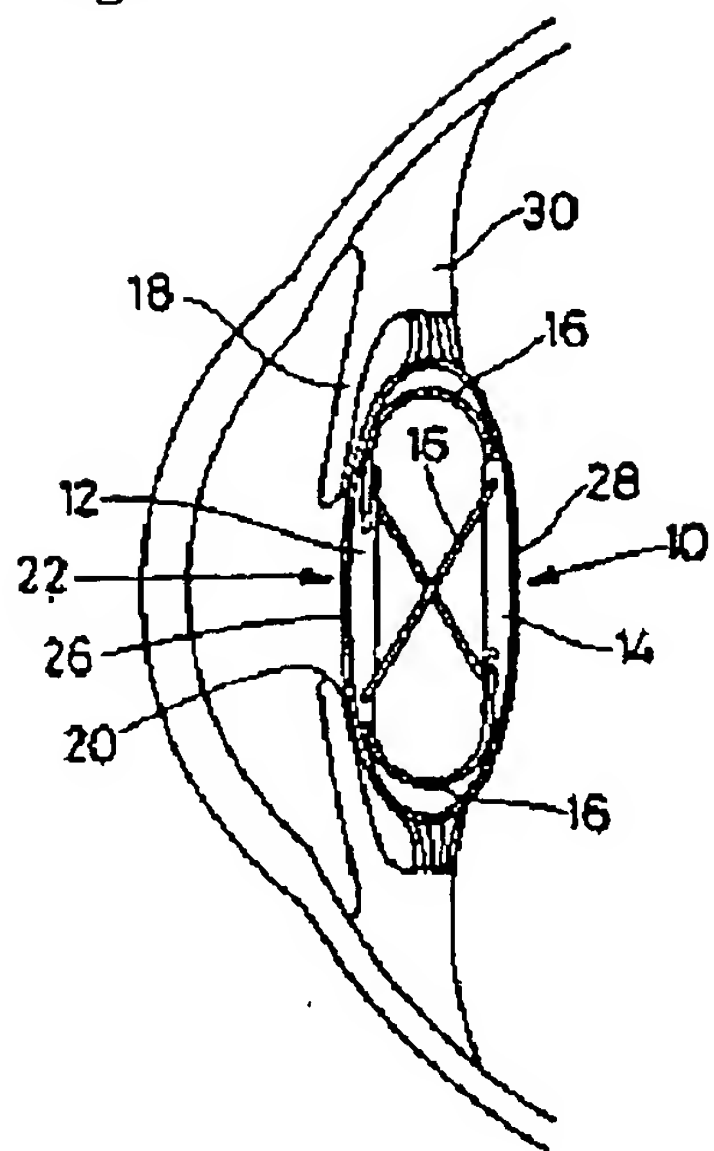


Figure 4

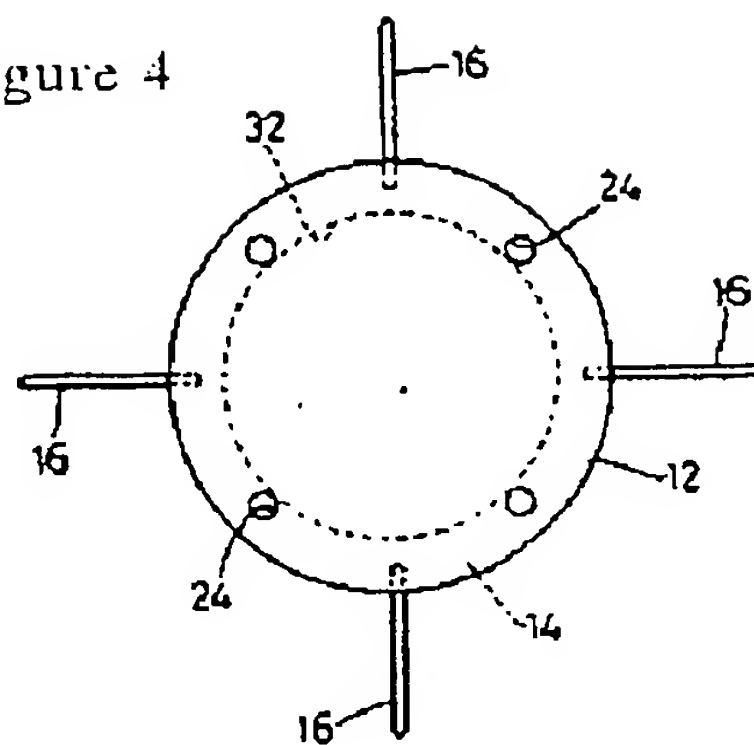


Figure 5

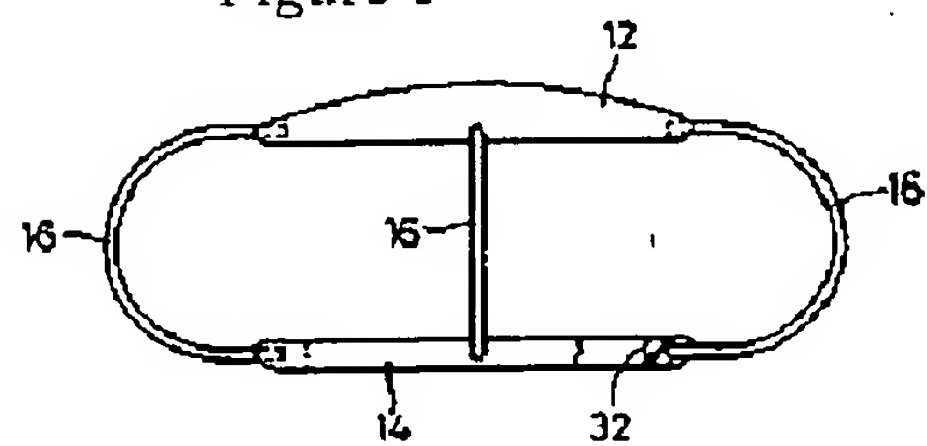


Figure 6

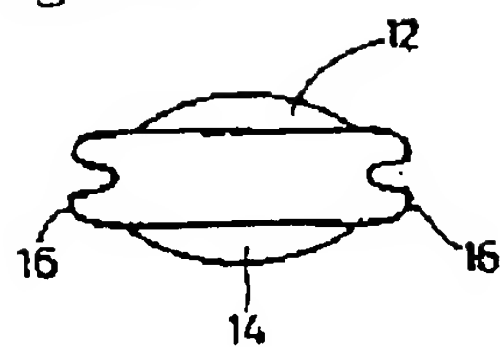


Figure 7

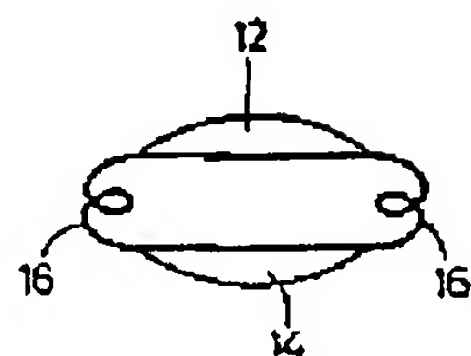


Figure 8

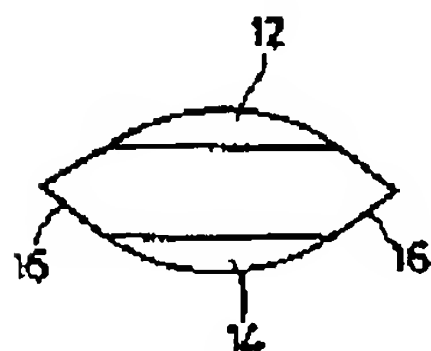


Figure 9

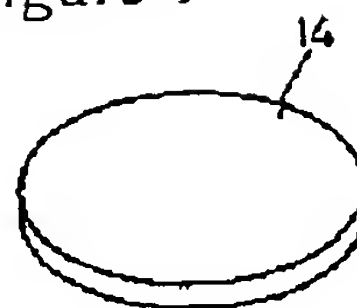


Figure 10

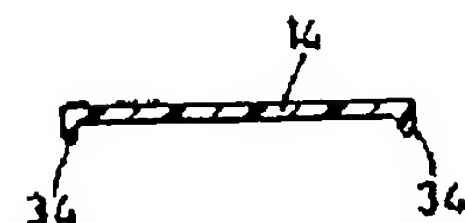


Figure 11

